



Offer #401-HHS-016

Field Operations

This offer includes the following appropriations: M10- Field Operations

Contact: Vern Armstrong, larmsr@dhs.state.ia.us (515) 281-3526

Program Description:

Who:

The Field Operations appropriation funds staff who directly and indirectly supports the delivery of the Department's services to Iowans.

The majority of Field Operation staff work with Iowans who receive or are in need of services provided by the Department. These staff are considered "front line" workers. The structure that supports the front line workers includes field management staff who manage the day-to-day operations and work with the local communities and governments to provide a balanced blend of state, local and community services that meet the unique needs in each area of the state. The structure also includes administrative management and customer service functions that provide direction, support, and resources for the front line staff and area management.

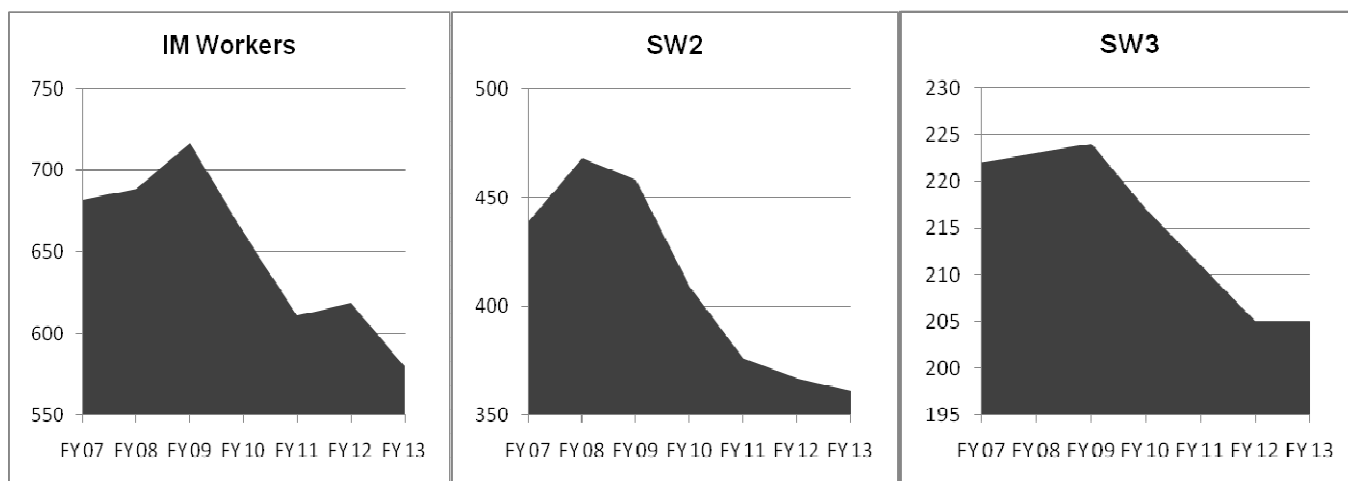
There are two sides to the field operation business: 1) social services, and 2) income maintenance. To provide coverage for both sides of the business across the state, it is estimated that 1,605 staff can be funded with the status quo State Fiscal Year 2013 general fund appropriation. Continued budget cuts have had a direct impact on the number of staff available to meet the growing level of those in need of services. For comparison, there were 2023 staff in January of 2009, by July 2010 the level had dropped to 1807, and the adjusted budgeted level for SFY 2011 was at 1688. The SFY 2013 status quo levels represent a drop of 418 staff or 21% of the workforce in less than four years. The reduction in staff will have a significant impact on the number of cases handled by each worker and supervisory levels as follows:

For every 861 income maintenance cases, there is one, specialized Income Maintenance worker (IM2) assigned. The level of cases per worker has steadily increased as the number of workers has decreased going from 481 cases per worker in 2009, to 693 cases in 2011. The supervisory ratio for income maintenance workers is one supervisor to 14 professional staff.

For every 12.3 child or dependent adult abuse cases, there is one specialized Social Worker 3 (SW3) assigned. Because these cases involve the most vulnerable children and adults, the number of abuse related cases per worker had been held steady at 11 cases by shifting staffing reductions to other categories. The Child Welfare League of America recommends no more than 10 to 12 cases per worker.

There are 114 child related cases assigned to a Social Worker 2 (SW2). If a SW2 handles a purely child welfare caseload, they have 29 cases assigned. The remaining cases consist of child care services, adoptive placements, foster care licensure, or other child welfare services. The cases per worker have increased from 88 in 2009, to 109 in 2011. The supervisor to staff ratio for social workers is 1 supervisor to 7 professional staff.

Every reduction in staff has a direct impact on how timely and accurately services are delivered to lowans. The charts below show the loss of front line workers since 2007.



What:

Income Maintenance (IM): Front line IM staff work with low income lowans as well as the elderly, disabled individuals or pregnant women to meet their nutritional, financial, and medical needs at a basic level. An Income Maintenance worker's duties include taking applications from customers, verifying required information to determine eligibility, making referrals to the appropriate agencies for additional assistance and assuring benefits are issued timely and accurately. Internal duties include working with other agencies to make sure families are successful in transitioning from assistance, whenever possible. IM2s work with the elderly and disabled members to get the needed services from the Department or our partners. Programs covered by and related offers for specialized income maintenance staff include food assistance, cash assistance and family financial supports as described in Offer 001- Basic Needs. Families may receive more than one service, but as an example in SFY 2011 a monthly average of nearly 362,000 people participated in just the food assistance program.

Income maintenance staff also determine and annually re-determine eligibility for Medicaid services as described in Offer 003-Medical Assistance. In SFY 2013, it is expected that over 690,000 lowans will apply for and receive some level of medical assistance.

The Child Care Assistance program, as described in Offer 009-Child Care, is another area supported by IM and specialized field staff. Child care services include the inspections of facilities, provider support, and payment for services that allow families to return or continue to work towards self sufficiency. In SFY 2011, over 23,000 children monthly received child care services and staff supported 1,400 licensed child care centers and 4,900 registered child care development homes

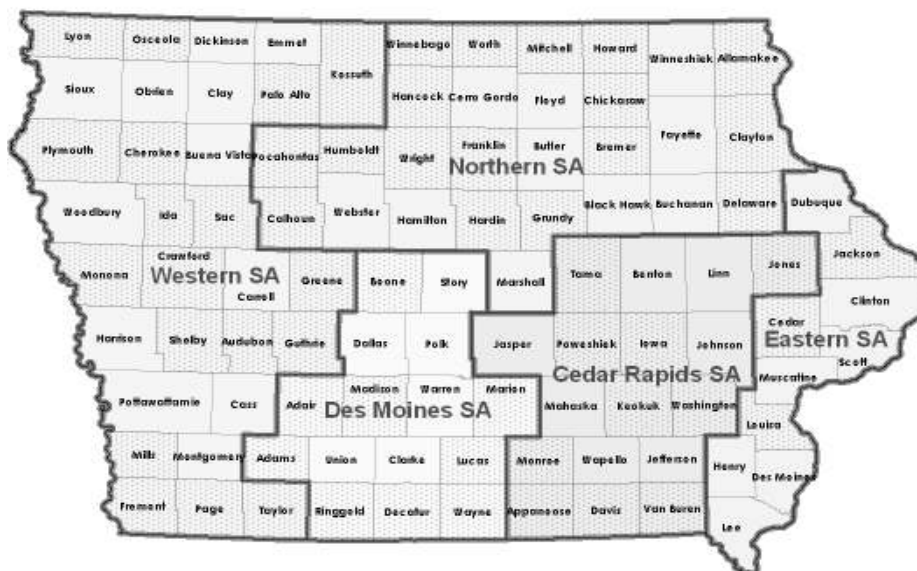
Social Services: Front line staff work to assure the safety of children and dependent adults while working to help families stay together whenever possible. When it is not possible for a child to remain in their home, staff work to help find a safe, stable and permanent living arrangement. Social Worker 3 staff complete child and dependent adult assessments when abuse is alleged. The worker addresses safety issues, evaluates service needs, and makes recommendations regarding protection of the child/dependent adult.

Social Worker 2 staff are responsible for helping families identify service needs, developing case plans, and coordinating services available through the Department or community providers to aid families in maintaining children in their home. Social Worker 2's also actively work with families, providers, and Juvenile Court to achieve safe reunification of families or permanency when children are removed from their home because of identified safety issues. Programs covered by and related offers for specialized social service staff include; 007-Child Welfare, including PALS (Successful Transition to Adulthood), and 009-Adoption. At any given time, approximately 5,000 Iowa children are placed in an alternative setting due to an unsafe living environment in their home. In SFY 2011, the Department finalized 850 adoptions and 129 dependent adults are receiving departmental services.

How:

Service Delivery Areas: In the late spring of 2010, ongoing budget reductions resulted in over 80 staff being laid off and over 260 staff retired under the early retirement program. The field structure was reduced from 8 service delivery areas covering the state to 5 areas plus a centralized service area. The state's counties and population (as of the 2008 U.S. Census) are divided across the service areas as follows:

Western Iowa Service Area - 30 Counties, Population: 566,690
 Northern Iowa Service Area - 27 Counties, Population: 573,796
 Eastern Iowa Service Area - 10 Counties, Population: 494,879
 Cedar Rapids Service Area - 17 Counties, Population: 614,295
 Des Moines Service Area - 15 Counties, Population: 752,895



Each of the 5 services areas is structured similarly with about 270 staff, on average, allocated as follows:

- About 72 SW2-social work case management staff.
- Approximately 36 SW3-abuse related social work staff.
- On average, 15 social work supervisors
- An average of 101 IM line staff (financial, nutritional, and medical assistance) plus 7 supervisors.
- Approximately 39 staff to process payments, manage office duties and provide clerical level work; or about 1 support person for every 7 front line and supervisory staff.
- A team of 7 to 8 staff, including a Service Area Manager to oversee day-to-day business operations and work with the local and county governments.

The sixth service area was created to centralize functions with the intent of: a) removing routine work from specialized staff; b) creating consistency in the application of policies, and most importantly; c) to create efficiencies in response to reduced staffing levels.

The Centralized Service Area, established in 2010, brought together existing units (e.g., the Income Maintenance Customer Service Center) and established new units to deal with the reduced staffing levels and create efficiencies (e.g., Child Care Registration and Payments). The development of this service area meant that positions, previously located across the state, were eliminated and units were moved to centralized locations to provide for closer supervision of specialized program areas.

The Centralized Service Area is comprised of 233 staff. There are 3 positions that oversee operational functions, including a Service Area Manager. The remaining units funded under this offers are currently staffed as follows:

- The Centralized Service Intake Unit handles reports of child and dependent adult abuse. The unit is comprised of 35 staff, 29 of whom are social workers, taking reports of abuse and/or making determinations on which cases are referred for additional investigation.
- The Centralized Child Care Unit supports both providers and lowans receiving child care benefits. The unit has 46 income maintenance staff for the eligibility aspects of the work and 28 support staff to handle the billing, registration and phone inquiries.
- The Facility Eligibility Unit works with providers and lowans who receive Medicaid coverage for nursing facility services. The unit has a total of 26 staff including 24 income maintenance staff.
- The IM Customer Service Center takes over 28,000 calls per month from lowans who need to report changes the may impact their eligibility or have questions about coverage and eligibility for other assistance programs. The call center has a total of 61 staff of which 52 are income maintenance staff.
- The Child Care Licensure group includes 11 social workers responsible to assure that child care centers meet the state's licensing requirements. Annual on-site visits are made to ensure that the minimum requirements as specified by child care licensing rules are met. The unit is responsible for researching complaints from parents and the public as well as completing the reporting and inspections for initial licensing.

- The Title IV-E Unit manages the portion of child welfare cases that allow the Department to claim matching federal funding under Social Security Act Title IV-E. When all criteria are met up to 40% of the cost for a child in out of home care is paid for with federal funds. The unit has a total of 23 staff of which 18 are IM staff and 2 are social workers to partner in the review of cases and requirements.

Administrative management and customer service within the Division of Field Operations:

There are 4 staff who provide services to customers, respond to legislative and public inquiries, monitor expenses, work with auditors and provide operational support for the Division as well as the Department, including the Division Administrator.

There are 35 additional staff in the Division who support the service area staff. The Division includes help desk staff available to provide assistance to workers and supervisors on individual cases and support best practices in the most complex of cases. A small group of staff provide specialized, initial and continuing education. Other units with the Division work closely with other divisions, state agencies, stakeholders, and partners to plan best practices and maintain compliance with state and federal laws and rules. Other staff includes contracting specialists and human resources support.

Results Achieved:

Result:	SFY 2011 Actual Level	SFY 2012 Budgeted Level	SFY 2013 Offer Level
Children in care are safe from abuse	99.6%	99.6%	99.6%
Percentage of children having monthly face-to-face visits with their DHS caseworker	79%	75%	75%
Food Assistance benefits will be accurate	97%	96%	96%

Sustaining service delivery assumes the level of funding requested in the offer as well as full funding of salary adjustment. If funding is insufficient in either area, results to be achieved will be modified to reflect the impact. This offer also assumes no further change to the policy base.

Impact of Proposed Budget on Results:

Current Results:

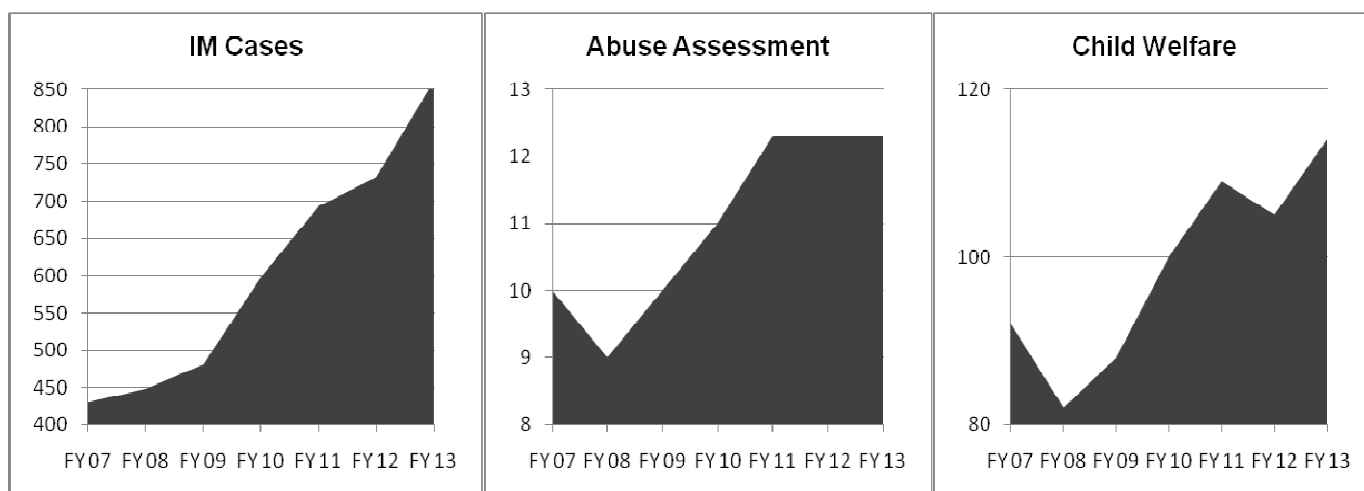
Impact on the number of cases assigned to each worker:

At the status quo staffing levels, Field Operations staff will strive to maintain compliance with all state and federal requirements for social service and income maintenance related programs. Increased case loads and decreased staffing levels will continue to place a strain on the individual workers, make workers more prone to error and are likely to increase waiting time for lowans in need of these services.

With no additional funds in SFY 13, the number of cases assigned to each worker will be as follows:

Budget Year Information	IM Cases Per Worker	Social Worker 3- (Abuse) CPW	Social Worker 2- Ongoing services CPW
SFY 11 Level	693	12.0	104
SFY 12 Funded Level	732	12.3	105
SFY 13- with no current service level funding for caseload growth and increased staff cost	861	12.3	114

The trend of growing caseloads has been ongoing since 2007. The chart represents caseload growth from 2007 through 2013 at the status quo level.



Impact on customer service without current service level funding:

The estimated impact on case management services to children who have been abused is:

- Case managers will be unable to visit an estimated 2,641 children (25.48%) in out of home placements each month. This will impact the length of time those children remain in out of home placement. In addition, it means that the state will not meet the federal established standard of 90% of visits performed monthly in 2013 – which will likely result in federal financial sanctions.
- Case managers will not be able to spend adequate time in case planning for an estimated 11.4 % of children resulting in incomplete identification of needs or strategies regarding educational, health, and mental health needs.
- An estimated 45 additional children will wait longer than one year to be adopted because staff cannot perform the necessary work to place the child in an adoptive family or complete the paperwork necessary for the Court to complete the adoption.

The estimated impact on families receiving nutritional, financial and medical needs will be related to the delays in processing their applications for services. The impacts are estimated to be:

- An estimated 2733 individuals and families (23.6%) will not receive their food assistance within 30 days, which will increase demand on local food pantries and general relief.
- An estimated 640 individuals (26.7%) each month will not receive their Medicaid card within 30-45 days, which means they will either delay medical treatment or pay out of pocket.

Errors in accurately calculating food assistance benefits are estimated to increase by over 16.8%. This means individuals will receive either too much or too little in benefits and the federal government will impose financial sanctions as Iowa is currently in a sanction mode.

Reasons for the Growth/Increased Cost in Service Levels:

The Department and the Division will continue to seek out new efficiencies and consolidate functions wherever the cost and benefits to Iowans can be demonstrated, but the majority of the field operations budget, over 94%, is designated for salaries. There are increased costs for doing business, changes to federal regulations and costs when fewer staff must drive longer distances to see clients. These changes total about \$4.37 million and at this level, a total of 1688 FTEs are funded. Additionally, the number of people who require the services of the Department continues to increase annually, compounded in part by the downturn in the economy over the past few years. This growth has resulted in an increased need for 57 staff or a total of 1745 FTEs with a corresponding financial impact of \$3.15 million.

This offer also includes a package to bring the income maintenance caseloads to a manageable level and to bring the abuse related cases per worker into alignment with the Child Welfare League of America's recommendation.

With the current service level; funding requested in this offer, cases per worker will decrease as follows:

Budget Year Information	IM Cases Per Worker	Social Worker 3- (Abuse) CPW	Social Worker 2- Ongoing services CPW
SFY 13- with no current service level funding for caseload growth and increased staff cost	861	12.3	114
SFY 13 (Packages 1 & 2)	732	12.3	105
SFY 13 Fully Funded (Package 3)	719	11.68	105

Improved Results:

There is one improved result package proposed in this offer. This package supports the creation of a centralized unit that will specialize in assuring financial and medical benefit integrity, focusing on individuals who are inappropriately receiving benefits in more than one state. When it is determined that benefits were paid inappropriately, the unit will work to recoup the funds. There will be first year start-up costs, but recoveries should be sufficient to make the unit cost neutral in future years. February and May 2011 data indicates potential recoveries of \$1 to \$3 million annually.

There are Federal requirements for this effort, under the Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) program that became mandatory for all states in 2009. The urgency to move forward this year with an effective, consistent approach was prompted by information that Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) will include PARIS compliance in state audits beginning October 2011. Failure to comply could result in the loss of federal matching Medicaid administrative funds.